

CORE VALUES: WHAT MOTIVATES YOUTH

*Prepared for the Santa Fe / Los Alamos School Districts Media Literacy Tobacco Prevention Training
Based on Research conducted by Ford Hatayama under a CSAP grant*

Research shows that values stay consistent over a lifetime, but are expressed differently as one grows older. The values youth have today will be with them throughout their life, thus while changing what a student values is next to impossible, replacing behaviors young people engage in to express their values is relatively simple. The goal for adults teaching youth prevention is to show them how destructive behaviors do not fit in with the values they hold.

Barriers to a “values approach” to working with youth

- Paying attention to style, rather than looking deeper to see what’s behind it
- Skewed media coverage of youth
- Traditional judgements such as “what you’re doing isn’t even culture!”
- Unspoken assumptions such as: your culture is inferior
they’ll out grow it
I don’t get it
I was young once and I . . .
I’ve raised kids and I know . . .

You don’t really know Japanese culture because you’ve eaten sushi!

Core Values Youth Hold

- Self Reliance—Entrepreneur ship, Independent Thinking, a Do It Yourself approach to projects
- Idealism/Optimism—Though not about adults. Youth will try new things, and believe they will make lots of money in life though often lacking a concrete plan for doing so.
- Activism—Youth speak out, though they are usually not group oriented. They will often volunteer.
- Morality/Spiritualism—Most youth have Faith though not in formal groups. They are ethical.
- Authenticity—Youth want truth with out distortion. They will question everyone.
- Identity—Willing to try on new identities. May make radical shifts if shown how and why.

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